

A
S E R M O N
P R E A C H E D

Before the Honourable
House of Commons,
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St Margaret's Westminster,

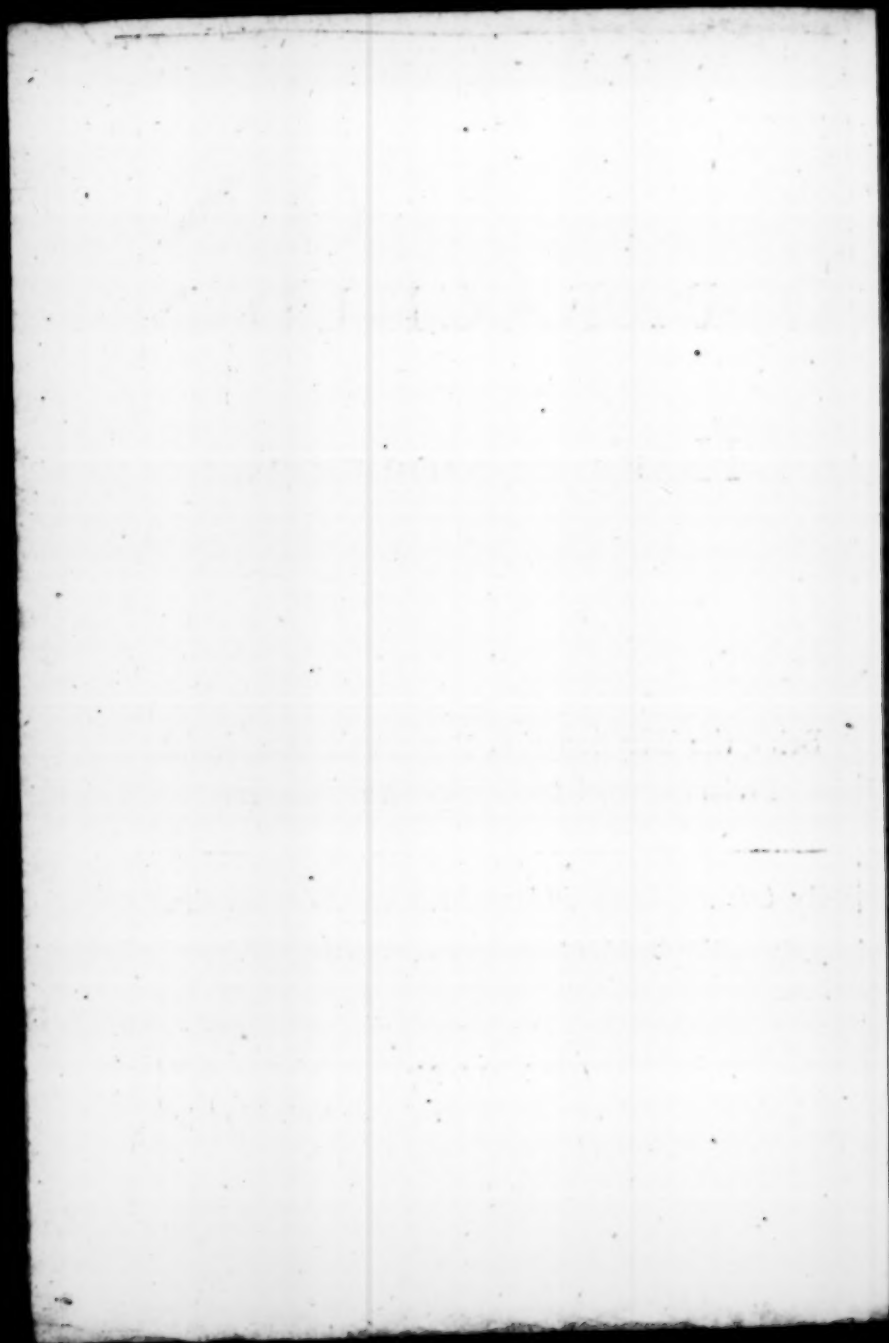
On *Sunday* the 19th of *October*, 1690.

Being the Thanksgiving-Day for the Wonderful
Preservation of His Majesties Person, &c.

By CHARLES HICKMAN, D.D. Chaplain
in Ordinary to Their Majesties.

L O N D O N,

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A S E R M O N

Preached before the Honourable

House of Commons.

ISA I. LX. x.

And the Sons of strangers shall build up thy Walls, and their Kings shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.

THE Jewish Church, for some Ages before its dissolution, was reduced to a very deplorable estate: Their corruptions at home had provok'd God to bring heavy oppressions upon them from abroad; and as he had formerly chose them out to be a peculiar People to himself, and given them most signal instances of his favour; so now, upon the abuse of these his Mercies,

his wrath was kindled against them, and they seem'd a people singled out for nothing but destruction; and accordingly we find their Chronicles represent them as a Nation forsaken of God, and persecuted by Man, and a constant succession of misfortunes fills up the History of their later times.

But though their Histories were dismal, yet their Prophecies afforded them a more hopeful prospect, and gave them assurances of a joyful revolution; that the time would come when *Jerusalem* also should have her day, and all her calamities should cease, and the dark side of fortune should be turn'd upon her Enemies: when the fullness of time was come to separate the wicked from the just, and make them ripe for a reformation, and affliction had prov'd their Doctrines and refin'd their Lives, then would God visit his ancient people again, and restore the beauty and strength of *Israel*: In the mean time they must be content to walk by Faith, and live in hope, when there was so little appearance of Charity upon Earth.

Such is the sence of the generality of their Prophecies, amongst which none is more particular and express than that which I have read unto you: *And the Sons of strangers, &c.* Where we have a glorious representation of the Church of Christ under the notion of *Kingdom*, or rather it represents to us the glories of a *Kingdom*, as it stands in Conjunction with the Church
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of Christ, when it enjoys a confluence of both spiritual and temporal blessings, and flourishes in the favour of God and Man; then is *Sion* a strong place indeed, the joy of all the ends of the earth, when her borders are extended, and her establishment is fix'd upon a larger bottom, and consequently upon surer ground: when strangers themselves shall pay homage at her Courts, and their Kings shall contribute to her prosperity; and above all, the favour of God shall compleat her happiness, and turn her heaviness into joy; all that the Piety, or even the ambition of Man can desire, is here propos'd as the Portion of the Christian Church; which that we may make our selves partakers of, and have our share in the triumphs as well as in the hardships of Religion, we have no more to do, but

I. To understand the nature of this blessing promis'd in my Text. And

II. To perform those duties which God requires of us in order to obtain it.

I. That we may understand the true nature and value of this deliverance promis'd in my Text, let us consider, 1. What it was that threw down the Walls of *Jerusalem*, and 2. Who it was that built them up; the first of which Considerations will shew us why God smote her in his wrath, the second, how in his favour he had mercy on her.

First,

First, If we consider the many and gross corruptions which the Jews were guilty of, it cannot seem strange that God should throw down their Walls, notwithstanding all those favours which he had shew'd them heretofore; nay chiefly for those very favours sake. He had formerly blessed them with a pure Religion, and a fruitful Land, the two choicest Blessings both of Heaven and Earth; and for the security of both, had fenced them in on every side, giving them his Law for a standing testimony, and his Promise for a sure defence and with these high Pretogatives he plac'd them like *a City upon a Hill*, too strong to be invaded, and too lofty to be conceal'd.

While they kept stedfast to that word which God had given them for their ornament and preservation, they drew the Eyes of all the World upon them; and stood, the envy of some, the joy of others, and the admiration of all. *But Israel would not obey, my people would not consider*, and so they grew corrupted in their Doctrines, and vicious in their Lives, till all those things ran cross against them; the joy and admiration all ceas'd, and nothing but the envy left, and that at last grew up into perfect enmity and opposition. Nay so far did this enmity prevail against them, and brought them so very low, that the passions of Men turn'd to the other extream, and instead of being envy'd, they were sometimes pity'd, but most commonly despis'd,
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for their sins they became obnoxious unto God, and by their divisions they expos'd themselves to Men; and then what could hinder their falling a prey to the next Invader? How often did God prove them by the *Canaanites*, vex them with the *Midianites*, and oppress them by the *Philistines*? Every little contemptible Nation, which he left as thorns in their sides, took courage sometimes to goad them to the heart; till at last God brought a mighty Conqueror into the very bowels of their Country, laid a heavy destruction upon their heads, and the *Romans* came and took away both their place and Nation.

So dangerous a thing is it for any people to presume upon their Prerogatives, and depend upon their exemptions, and neglect that vertue upon which all their grants are founded, as if any Charter were of force to hold out against God himself; therefore they forfeited that liberty which they had so long abus'd; and that law which they themselves perverted, was very justly consign'd unto other hands; a Calamity which was often foretold them by the Prophets, but was never believ'd till it came to pass. Many a time were they admonish'd to repent, that they might prevent the danger; but yet they delay'd so long till the danger overtook them, and prevented their repentance.

Such then was their temporal estate. But their spiritual

ritual was as bad or worse. Religion was now grown into Faction, and several Parties disturb'd the unity of the Church; and when their Faith was so divided, every Man took so much of it as would please his fancy, or serve his turn.

The *Sadducees*, they would believe as far as *Moses* went, but nothing further; a Sect of Men that set up for Atheism and Irreligion. For though they did observe the Laws, and, in obedience to those Laws, would perform the Sacrifices too; yet, as for the mysteries of Religion, they renounced them all; Angels and Spirits, and all immaterial substances they look'd upon as a contradiction, and would know nothing of: And when they had robb'd God of all his Attendants, they left his Majesty to shift for it self. His Providence also they thrust out of their Creed; and the Resurrection too, which is the great power of God, the only solid foundation of all Religion, they wholly rejected as a fiction of Men, and made it the subject of their derision and wit.

And that which gave occasion for all this blasphemy, was nothing but the *Pharisees*, another Sect of Men, who ran to the quite contrary extream; so great pretenders to Religion, and that with so ill a grace, that they brought Religion it self into contempt; and by their affected Pride they did the cause of God more harm than all their sanctity could do it good.

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And, as Vice is always upon the improvement, from them there sprang up a third order of Men, who call'd themselves *Zealots* for the Law, as proud as the *Pharisees*, but more fiery than they. *Crucify him, Stone him, Cast him out,* were the Characters whereby they distinguish'd their Religion, and their only Arguments to support it; and with these Arguments they assaulted one another.

Lord! in how dismal a condition is such a distracted Church? Amidst all these Contentions, what room is there left for Vertue; or what respect can be shew'd to one that is an Israelite indeed? To such a condition had these proud, contending Parties brought themselves, till at last came the *Romans*, with a pride above them all, who derided all Religions but their own, and admir'd their own they knew not why: Only their Conquests gave it credit; Universality was their Plea; and they despis'd a little, peculiar, but more especially a divided Church. How did they vilifie the Law, and prophane the holy Place, and tempt the People to blaspheme the Name of God? How did they ensnare the weak in Faith, and exasperate the strong, by imposing upon their worship, and setting up Idolatrous Statues in the Temple, that by that abomination they might provoke the people to Sedition first, and then destroy them for it?

Something like this, and that almost in every par-

ticular, we our selves have too much reason to remember: with how much industry and art our Adversaries endeavour'd to divide us first, and then break in upon us: with what insolence they invaded our Laws, and attempted our Religion; and, instead of the pure worship of one God, as it is here profess'd and practis'd amongst us, they would have set up an absurd Idolatry of Mans contriving, a fabulous Divinity of their own finding out, and as many Gods as the old *Romans* themselves pretended to. With what fury they drove on their designs, and how far they advanc'd towards bringing them to effect, we all know too well to stand in need of a Remembrancer; and I am loth to sowre the Solemnity of a Thanksgiving-Day, by such ungrateful melancholy reflections: Let it suffice to say, That God has *smitten us in his wrath*, and for our sins has suffer'd our Walls to be brought in danger, and this will make us more apprehensive of *his favour*, in that he has at last had mercy on us.

Which is the second thing propos'd. Who it is that builds us up. *Build thou the Walls of Jerusalem*, says the Psalmist, to shew us that God is the Author of our establishment; and that we may know what instruments he employs, *The sons of strangers shall build them up, their Kings shall minister unto thee*, says my Text. Whensoever God pleases he can make the remotest Persons

to contribute, and the unlikeliest circumstances to concur for the good of his Church and People; though for their transgressions he sometimes suffers their Walls to be broken down, yet as long as the foundation stands, the stone out of the Wall shall cry, Rejoice not against me, O my Enemy, and the beam out of the timber will answer it; Though I fall, yet I shall arise again.

In sundry manners he works out our preservation, and sometimes by unexpected means. When our dangers are come to the height, and there is no humane hopes of redemption left, then is the time for him to interpose, that we may see the Finger of God in a wonderful deliverance. We cannot discover the motions of his hand; the overtures of Providence are all miraculous to us; 'tis enough that we see the revolution, though the springs of it are out of sight. *His way is in the Sea, and his paths in the deep Waters, and his footsteps are past finding out.*

When Pharaoh would not let his People go, nor allow them to serve their God; when all their former fidelity and services could not move him, and all their solicitations and intreaties made him but more averse; his anger did that which his kindness would not do; it drove the Children of Israel, not into the Red Sea, as he thought, but the nearest way to the pleasant Land; the Sea it self was a Wall unto them, but a ruine

ruine to the *Egyptians*; and there the unhappy King was lost, but the poor passive *Israelites* were safe and inoffensive still. When God sends forth his People naked and disarm'd, he himself undertakes for their defence, and will not suffer their innocence and obedience to lead them into a snare. If thy own Sons must not perform the work, *the Sons of Strangers shall build up thy Walls*; and the wisdom of God never wants sufficient means to rescue his Church, without dishonouring of his Religion.

Indeed, there is nothing but a steady preserving the Principles of Religion that makes any Church worth the contending for. These are the Houses, the Palaces, that make up the City, and if they are down, to what purpose should we build up the Walls? but if these are preserv'd intire, the Walls will quickly be repair'd again. *Strangers themselves will build them up*, when they see the beauty and advantage of the situation; and if we our selves do not depart from our fidelity, God never fails to raise up mighty Defenders of our Faith. A stedfast adhering to the Principles of Religion, is the very thing that invites Converts unto the Church. 'Twas this that reduc'd the Nations to the belief in Christ, and brought the Heathen into his Inheritance; not the Eloquence, much less the Learning of his Apostles, but the constancy of their Faith, and the unalterable sincerity of their profession; not only
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the strength of their reasons, but the vigour and firmness of their Minds; that they would suffer the last extremity rather than depart from the Principles of their Innocency, or violate the least punctilio of their Religion: 'Twas that that baffled the Cruelty of their Tormenters; made the Roman Eagle both ashamed and weary of her prey, and submit at last to the Christian Dove.

And give me leave to say for the honour of our Mother Church, That when she was so furiously assaulted by the Roman Adversary, those inveterate Enemies both to God and Man, though there was neither Learning, nor Eloquence, nor Reason wanting on her part, enough to silence any reasonable Disputant; yet nothing was so great a baffle to their Cause, as to see the stedfastness and firmness of your Faith, join'd with the patience and modesty of your behaviour, that we were active in obedience to our Prince, as far as our Conscience would give us leave; and when he requir'd of us more than this, we receiv'd his Commands with sorrow, but submitted to his displeasure with a good will; with such a Christian temper, with so affectionate a concern, as shew'd that we were more troubled for his Misfortunes than for our own; though our open Enemies, and his false Friends, had so far wrought upon him, that they were well near leading us into Captivity, yet still there was no complaining in our streets.

For

For this our patience and submission, God has rewarded us when Man would not ; and as we suffer'd, without giving any provocation, so he has deliver'd us without any offence or fault of ours. St. Paul in his Epistle to the *Hebrews* commends some worthy Men of old for *suffering themselves to be tormented, and not accepting of deliverance* ; and indeed it was but necessary, when the terms upon which they were to be deliver'd, was a notorious violation of the Law of God ; but where a deliverance is offer'd, without any such terms as these, I know not why the bare *accepting* of it should be a fault ; especially, since this acceptance is the apparent way to prevent any such terms from being put upon us ; and to speak freely and plainly my humble opinion, without judging of other Men, I know no reason why the most conscientious Man may not *accept it*, nor ever heard one Argument against submitting to this present Government, but what seems to intrench upon that great Prerogative of God, by which *Kings Reign, and Princes decree justice*.

The Hearts of Kings are in the hands of God, and so are their Scepters too, and he often changes their Property, sometimes for the punishment, and sometimes for the benefit of his People ; 'tis his own peculiar jurisdiction, and we dare not oppose it, *for fear we be found fighting against God himself*.

He has appointed Kings to be the nursing Fathers of
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his Church, and 'tis no dishonour to the greatest Prince, to *minister* (as my Text calls it) to Religion. Nay, if the expression be not too familiar, 'tis their duty so to do, for which they are strictly accountable unto God himself; and therefore according as they discharge that trust, or according as a Church deserves, so God sometimes gives her Kings in his anger, and sometimes takes an angry King away; alienates the affections of his People, and lays a damp upon their Spirits; and when their hands are lifted up in his defence, yet they have not the heart to strike the blow. Thus he disposes of the Government of the World by an unaccountable Wisdom, and an irresistible Power; sometimes he builds us up, and sometimes he pulls us down; but whatever is the success, God is the Author, and Kings are but the Instruments of the Revolution: Which as it is too mysterious for us to understand, so 'tis too sacred for us to oppose. *It is the Lords doing*; and the more marvellous it is in our Eyes, the more reason we have to submit. Since therefore we have all reason to conclude, That God *has visited us in his Mercy, and in his Favour has taken pity on us*; that this our Deliverance, which is so hopefully begun, may come to a happy issue, let us consider what remains on our part towards perfecting of this great Work. What are the Duties which God requires of us in order to effect it; which was our second general inquiry.

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And here if we consider the different manner of God's proceeding with us, that he first *smote us in his wrath*, and secondly, *in his favour has had mercy on us*, we shall find that each of these dispensations requires a particular duty from us. As,

1. We must needs confess, that God has *smitten us in his wrath*; for to this day we feel the blow; and as it was our Sin that gave the provocation, so nothing but repentance can make our Peace. For how can we think that God will countenance Vice, and encourage Irreligion, and bestow his favour upon those that neither deserve nor desire it. Successful wickedness, established Vice, is a Judgment upon those very Men that have it, and a grievance to all Mankind besides; 'tis such an exorbitant lawless Power, as God never permits in one Nation, but for a scourge unto another; and when he has chastis'd his People with it, he always burns the Rod. How then can we expect that our Walls should be secure, if there is nothing but *unrighteousness and strife in the City*? We see plainly that it cannot be. That a Nation no sooner grows vicious and corrupted in their Morals, but their politicks also come to nought, their Counsels are all defeated, and Vertue and Courage both come and go together: 'Tis this very thing that has occasion'd the fall of all the Empires of the World; and that by a very natural consequence.

For Vertue is the subject matter of all Laws, and the foundation of all establishment; and when that is once corrupted, the building will quickly fall in pieces. Vice in its own nature is an arbitrary unruly thing, and will never be brought under any rules of Government; but hates to be corrected, disdains to be controul'd; and 'tis the natural effect of Lust to *speak evil of dignities, and despise every Ordinance of Man*: 'Tis an evil of so obstinate a combination, that the Sword of the Magistrate cannot reach it; so private and retir'd, that nothing but the Eye of Providence can find it out. But though it is not subject to any outward force, yet there is a Canker bred within that will certainly be its ruine; 'tis corruption it self and corrupts all that is about it. First, It weakens the Sinews of a Commonwealth, and then throws it down; and so perishes it self in that destruction which it brings upon others. In a word, where there is no regard shew'd to Vertue, there can be no advancing of a National good; and publick Calamities are always the consequence of private Sins: Luxury eats out the riches of a Nation, and idleness hinders its increase: Covetousness debases the Spirits of the People, and Lust consumes their strength: Malice undermines, and ambition overturns a Government: And in general, there is no Vice, but when it is predominant, has a fatal aspect upon a Kingdom, and forebodes evil to the State.

If therefore we find that our happiness is interrupted, and the course of the World runs cross to our designs, let us not, like the false foolish Prophet, stand beating of the Airs, but look before us, and there we shall find, that an Angel of God stops our way. Let us not accuse other Men for those Misfortunes which are chiefly owing to our selves, but consider what it is that we deserve, and who it is that rewardeth every Man according to his works, and then we may quickly see from what quarter it is that our misfortunes come! How then can we sleep secure in a raging storm, with all our Lusts about us, when we have but one way to redress our selves, and that is, to *rise and call upon our God*; but one way to appease the storm, and that is by throwing over-board those Sins of ours that rais'd it? Since God *has smitten us in his wrath*, let us so behave our selves, that we may save both him and us the trouble of a second blow. Since he has bruis'd us for our transgressions, let us offer up unto him our broken hearts, and there shew him all our obstinacy subdu'd, and all our sins repented of; and above all our other sins, let us take particular care to repent of our Divisions, which as far as Man can judge, is that very sin which God smote us for. 'Tis observable, that in all his Judgments he gives some directions how to discover the offence, and the remedy carries some signature of the distemper'd part to which

it should be apply'd. If the ten Tribes revolt from *Rehoboam*, what could be expected less from the unreasonable Oppression of his Government? If these ten Tribes themselves are afterwards carry'd Captive into an idolatrous Land; what is this but the natural punishment of their own Idolatry, that they could not be contented with a separate state, but they must have a separate Religion too?

And by this judgment we may learn from whence our Calamities did proceed. We offended God by cherishing an enmity amongst our selves, and he in return exposes us to a Foreign Enemy. We sow the Seeds of Envy, and Hatred, and Malice in our Hearts; and he lets them grow up into unnatural Divisions; I had almost said into civil Wars; for what else can be expected from these vehement Animosities that still rage amongst us? If Men will always be heaping up of Fewel, and blowing of the Coals, 'tis no wonder if it breaks out at last into a Flame. *Hoc Isachus velit*, 'tis what our Adversaries desire, and all that they have to hope; and since we are not ignorant of their devices, let us not be taken in the Snare that lies open to our view, nor revenge their quarrel upon our selves.

Thus I have shew'd you the duty which most naturally arises from this consideration, *that God has smitten us in his wrath*; by the performance of this duty it is
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that we must restore our selves unto his favour, and there is nothing but his favour that can secure our establishment; we may apply our selves unto other means, and depend upon our own Wisdom, our own strength; but if Gods Blessing does not second our endeavours, *how vain is the help of Man?* What can all our power, and all our subtilty produce, but something like a Spiders Web; so thin, that every little Creature may see through it, and almost every Creature may brake it down? a curious Contrivance perhaps, but a very weak defence. There is not so cheated a thing in the World as a Worldly designing Man, who presumes upon his own Wit, and shuts God out of all his Consultations. How many disappointments does he meet with in his way? How heavily does he drive on his designs? and though there is neither care nor labour wanting on his part, yet he commonly wants success; enough to convince him, one would think, that it is God who takes off his Chariot Wheels, because of his disobedience; and the reason why he does not prosper is because he does not repent.

But secondly, What those duties are which we owe to God in return for his Mercies, which comes next to be consider'd, and is the proper business of this day, we must collect from the nature of those Mercies which he has bestow'd upon us. Indeed in some Cases it is a difficult thing to trace the steps of Providence,

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or to say positively what is favour and what is not ; for both Prosperity and Adversity are of a doubtful kind, and either of them may prove, according as they are manag'd, to be either a blessing or a Curse. It was the Wilderness that reform'd, but *Canaan* that corrupted *Israel* ; and therefore some of them had more reason to repine than they were aware of ; for it was indeed better to dy in *Egypt*, than come to be debauch'd in a pleasant Land.

Nay sometimes 'tis hard to discover what is for our Prosperity, and what is not ; no doubt but when the *Israelites* came to the Red Sea, they thought themselves in a very desperate Case ; and here 'tis no wonder that they did repine ; and yet here it was that God gave them a final deliverance from their implacable Enemy, and they were never troubled with the *Egyptians* more : So false a Judgment are we apt to make upon the outward circumstances of our Fortune.

And yet there are some Signals of God's Providence ; whereby he does plainly communicate his Mind unto his People ; some testimonies of his good will, wherein we cannot easily be mistaken. Revelations indeed are ceas'd, and therefore this is an evidence which we must not expect ; but as all that God did in those Revelation-days was just, so whenever he does the same thing again, if we have all the evidence that the nature of the thing will bear, 'tis very unreasonable in

us to look for more ; it was the poor Man's Plea in the Gospel, and is very worthy of our present Consideration. When the *Pharisees* were angry with him for suffering himself to be Cur'd upon the Sabbath day, and call'd our Saviour a Sinner for his pains ; the Man gave them this pertinent sober Answer, *Whether he be a Sinner or no, I know not ; but one thing I know, That whereas I was blind, now I see ;* and yet they question'd our Saviour's Commission for what he did, because they did not find it agreeable to their interpretation of the Law : To which the poor Man reply'd again, *Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.*

And upon this Foundation we may safely conclude from the late Deliverance which we have found, and the Success wherewith it has been attended since. 1. That God has signally manifested his favour to this our Church ; and, 2. That the King is the instrument whereby he has conferr'd this favour on us. And from hence there arises a twofold duty upon us.

1. That we should have a regard and reverence for the Church.

2. That we should pay honour and obedience to the King. And,

1. How great a veneration and esteem do we justly owe to that Church, which first rescued us from the Tyranny of the *Roman Yoke* ; recover'd the pure
Word

Word of God from their usurpation and disguise, and instated us in the true light of the Gospel. A Church, which for the purity of her Faith, and the regularity of her Institution, has ever since stood the Envy, and endur'd the brunt of Antichrist; and has so many miraculous deliverances to shew, that God has espous'd her Cause. We have heard with our Ears, and our Fathers have declar'd unto us, the Wonders which he did for her in their days, *and our own eyes also have seen the salvation of God.* How he rescued us from an implacable ravenous Herd of Men, who had nothing but numbers to entitle them to a Catholick Church, and with those numbers they design'd to over-power the truth; with those Wolves they thought to have worry'd this little Flock: Against us alone they bent all their Rage, and whet their Teeth in the late unhappy Reign; and when their small stock of Arguments was spent, they prepar'd for another kind of onset. But God deliver'd us from all the expectation of the Romans, and shew'd, that it was not their Church but ours that is founded upon that Rock: And I wish all they that are still projecting to overturn it, would for their own security consider this, *that no weapon ever prosper'd yet, that has been list'd up against it.*

And now for any of us to question the honesty of our Mother Church, which we have seen attested by so many unquestionable Proofs, by all the demon-

stration that the nature of the thing will bear, must be something more than Ignorance, something that I am loath to name. To forsake this guide of our youth, who never deserted us in any times of difficulty, never consulted her own safety when she saw her Sons in danger, but boldly oppos'd every Enemy, and stood in every breach: for us I say to desert her upon any score, is such vile ingratitude, as hardly can be parallell'd, but can never be excus'd. *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, said God, that ye should forsake me, and follow after other Gods.* A very serious Exposition, a most patheticall Complaint.

And the same thing may be said in behalf of our native Church. What is there in this our way of Worship that can justly give offence? What is there in the substance of it that the godliest Man can scruple, or the wisest Man can mend? What Supplication or Prayer can be made, for any Blessings, or any grant, of which our humane nature stands in need; that is not daily and decently offer'd up to God from this our House of Prayer? What Portion of God's Holy Word is there that is not here duly read, and I hope faithfully explain'd unto you? What Christian Doctrine have we conceal'd from you, or when have we taught you for Doctrine the Commandments of men? Where have we defrauded you of that which is the Word of God, or impos'd upon you that which is not?

If any of these charges can be made out, then we will willingly bear the blame till there is a Reformation ; but if they cannot be prov'd upon us, as I am certain that they can't ; if our Church has constantly discharg'd the duty of a careful Mother, then well may she expect from us the obedience of Sons ; or else cry out upon our disobedience, *What iniquity have you or your Fathers found in me ?*

In the mean while, I wish every Man would conscientiously consider this, That a needless separation is very far from being an indifferent harmless thing ; and therefore they whose Consciences will give them leave to Communicate with us at some times, I know not how they can excuse themselves for not doing always so ; for certainly Union is so positive a Command of God, and the want of it is of so pernicious consequence to the Souls of Men, that nothing but absolute necessity can give us a dispensation ; nothing can justify us for breaking the Unity of the Church, but when the terms of Communion are utterly unlawful ; if any Man thinks that our terms are such, they have their liberty ; and we have ours ; and so I hope there may be Charity, although there is not Union amongst us ; and therefore leaving every Man freely to his own way, as he will answer it to God, who cannot be deceiv'd, as well as to his own Conscience, which can ; let us proceed to the last thing propos'd, wherein I

hope we do all agree; and that is, in paying Honour and Obedience to our Sovereign; and that not only upon a Civil, but also upon a Sacred account; not only for wrath, but for Conscience sake. Kings are the only Persons upon Earth unto whom God has given an immediate delegation of his Authority; whom to obey, is to obey his Ordinance; and whom to resist, is to resist his Power: And whosoever denies Obedience to be a religious duty, takes away from the King the fairest Jewel in his Crown, and the strongest Fortrefs in his Dominion.

But this is a Doctrine that has been so frequently discuss'd of late; so learnedly demonstrated, and so undeniably establisht amongst us, that there is no need to insist upon it now. Only give me leave to say, That notwithstanding the unreasonable cavils of gainsaying men, yet *Passive Obedience* always was, and I hope always will be, the Doctrine and Practice of the Church of England. I am sure 'tis a Doctrine of which no Church need be asham'd, and no King can be afraid: And to this I shall only add, That all that Obedience which the Scripture requires us to pay unto the King, we must now look upon as devolv'd upon their present Majesties, and properly belonging to their Claim. *The Powers that are* (says the Apostle) *are ordained of God*; and upon that account they justly Challenge our Submission. And in this point, though I must

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not say with St. Paul, *that I think I have the Spirit of God* ; yet I dare say, that I have the Spirit of that Church in which I was born and bred. And I dare say no more : For Crowns and Scepters are very nice, curious things ; something akin to the Ark of God ; they must be handled with Ceremony : and though we approach them with never so much respect, yet by an unskilful touch, we may easily offend ; and 'tis a trespass upon Majesty to come too near it.

As for You, whom God, and the King, have placed in a nearer station to the Throne, in God's Name consult and labour to support it : But our Duty is, to keep at an humble distance, and obey, and to pray, *That God would prosper all your Consultations for his Glory and the good of his Church, and for the Safety, Honour and Welfare of Their Majesties and Their Kingdoms.*

F I N I S.

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